

Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies

M. Saryan

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February 20, 2004
UCLA
Royce Hall 314

On behalf of UCLA's Graduate Students Association, I welcome you to this, the second annual Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies. Whether from the various departments on campus, the local Los Angeles community, or fellow institutes of higher learning, you have come to take part in a unique experience - a gathering of graduate students from around the world who will present their works in progress and their contribution to the growing, interdisciplinary field of Armenian Studies.

Today you have the opportunity to explore a range of topics with the featured speakers. What is the impact of the American education system on ethnic identity? What are the perceptions that draw the geopolitical lines of today's Caucasus? How do two writers one from the late 18th century and the other from the early 20th century each reflect upon the origins of human kind? It is a testament to the organizational strength of the graduate student organizing committee of the Armenian Graduate Students Association that such a mosaic is hosted at UCLA.

I am certain that this colloquium will introduce you to new ideas and plant the seeds of new questions - and potentially collaborations - so that we can all meet again in future years to see the fruits of the academic discourse of today.

*Անկողմնորոշ - Sincerely,
Hanish Rathod*

*President
UCLA Graduate Students Association*

The organizing committee of the Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies (G&CinA) is pleased to welcome you to today's proceedings. This year's program marks the second time this event is being hosted at UCLA, a premier institution for the growing field of Armenology and a leader in interdisciplinary studies. Once again, we hope that the colloquium will foster the development of Armenian Studies, facilitate interaction between graduate students and faculty from various institutions, provide a forum for the exchange of ideas, and contribute to the professional and academic development of graduate students.

This year's organizing committee has brought together a unique group of scholars from all over the world, including Armenia, Europe, and Lebanon to present their works in progress. Although all the topics are related to Armenian Studies, they represent a wide range of fields from history and political science to literature, linguistics, and education. We hope that the colloquium will offer a unique opportunity for both the presenters and the audience to engage in academic discussion and illuminate numerous issues in the dynamic and diverse area of Armenian Studies. In this way, we hope to encourage student scholarship and provide an arena for the development of new ideas and progress in Armenian Studies.

Once again, we would like to welcome you all undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, and the community at large to today's program. We hope that you each glean something new and leave with an anticipation for future colloquia to come.

Sincerely,

The 2004 G&CinA's Committee

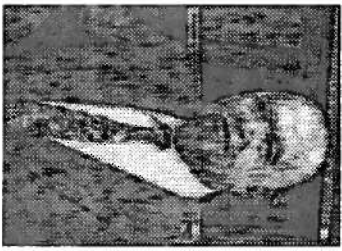
THE UCLA PROGRAM IN ARMENIAN STUDIES

Armenian Studies at UCLA began in 1960 with the appointment of some temporary instructors, including Louise Nalbandian, Kevoork Sarafian, and Rev. Sempad Lapajian. Teaching was supported by the bequest of the library of Dr. K. M. Khantamour, which formed the nucleus of the university's rich current holdings in the field. The discipline was augmented in 1962 with the appointment of Professor Richard G. Hovannisian, first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Chair in Modern Armenian History established in 1987. Teaching in language and literature was established on a permanent footing with the coming of Professor Avedis K. Sanjian in 1965, who guided the development and expansion of this area over the next three decades. In July 200 Dr. S. Peter Cowe was appointed as his successor.

Thanks to the fundraising campaign spearheaded by the National Association for Armenian Studies and Research, the Narekatsi Chair in Armenian Studies was founded in 1969 and, as such, has the distinction of being the oldest endowed chair at UCLA. This important milestone inaugurated the graduate program, preparing candidates for the degrees of M.A. and Ph.D. The accession of the Minasian collection of manuscripts and printed books in the following year greatly enhanced the program's research capabilities. Classes were supplemented by a series of lectures, symposia, and exhibitions exposing Armenian culture to a broad public.

Since 1997 regular instruction in East Armenian has complemented teaching in West Armenian: currently Dr. Anahid Keshishian is lecturer in the former and Dr. Gayane Hagopian in the latter. This was followed by the introduction of a popular undergraduate minor in Armenian Studies. The next year marked the graduation of the first student to select an Individual Major in Armenian Studies and the inauguration of the annual Moutk featuring articles, reviews, and fiction by students in the program. Currently proposals are underway to institute an undergraduate major in Armenian Studies.

Armenian Studies Faculty



Richard G. Hovannisian

Dr. Richard G. Hovannisian is Professor of Armenian and Near Eastern History at the University of California, Los Angeles. A member of the UCLA faculty since 1962, he has organized the undergraduate and graduate programs in Armenian and Caucasian history. In 1987, Professor Hovannisian was appointed the first holder of the Armenian Educational Foundation Endowed Chair in Modern Armenian History. From 1978 to 1995, he also served as the Associate Director of the G.E. von Grunbebaum Center for Near Eastern Studies. The author of six scholarly studies and editor of several collected papers and conference proceedings, Hovannisian is a Guggenheim Fellow, and serves on the editorial boards of five journals and on the board of directors of ten civic and scholarly organizations. The recipient of numerous honors in recognition of his academic achievements, he was elected a member of the Armenian National Academy of Sciences in 1990.



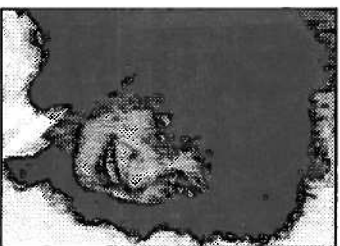
S. Peter Cowe

Dr. S. Peter Cowe is Narkatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at UCLA. Previously he has held positions in Armenian Studies at Columbia University, New York, and the University of Chicago. His research interests include medieval Armenian intellectual history, modern Armenian nationalism, the Armenian lyric tradition, and Armenian film and theater. The author of five books in the field, he has recently returned from a field trip documenting contemporary drama in Armenia and Georgia. A regular contributor to Armenianological journals, he is currently co-editor of the Journal of the Society for Armenian Studies.



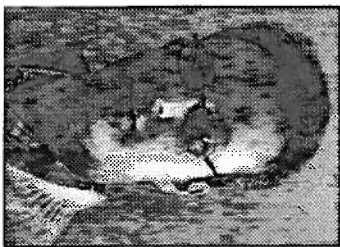
Anahid Aramouni Keshishian

Dr. Anahid Aramouni Keshishian is lecturer in Eastern Armenian at UCLA and instructor in Armenian language and literature at Glendale Community College. She received her Ph.D. from Yerevan Institute of Literature for her thesis 'Hakob Karapants: His Worldview and Art' (Armenian Academy of Sciences, 1999). Dr. Keshishian has had a varied career as a researcher first in the Museum of the Ararat Valley of Ejmiatsin and later in the archives of the Armenian Review in Boston. She has been the publisher and the editor of "The Eighties," a social and literary magazine, as well as the editor of the student magazine "Mouk" published by UCLA NELC. She is a member of the Society for Armenian Studies, the Middle East Studies Association, and the Arvest Art and Literary Association. Keshishian has written extensively on social and political issues and on Armenian literary themes. She is also the founder and director of Los Angeles based art organization, "Arenda Productions."



Gayane Hagopian

Dr. Gayane Hagopian is lecturer of Western Armenian and linguistics at UCLA and Chapman University. She has held positions in linguistics and Armenian studies at the Linguistics Institute of the Academy of Sciences, Yerevan State University, American University of Armenia, Khrimian Hayrik Armenological School (Armenia), and UC Berkeley, St. Mary's College, JFK University (CA). Her main research interests concern the relationship between cognition, reality and language which involve research in language acquisition, ethnolinguistics, history of language and paremiology. She has published numerous articles and a monograph ("Age Terms in Armenian") in these fields. She has prepared a textbook of Western Armenian (see NELC website) and currently works on proverbs.



Andrea Scala

Linguistics and Philology, State University of Milan, Italy State University of Innsbruck, Austria

Andrea Scala was born in Piacenza, Italy, in 1973. He was awarded his B.A. degree in Classical Studies at the Catholic University of Milan, which included writing a thesis about the early Armenian translation of Plato's Laws. His subsequent Ph.D. research has centered on the early Armenian translation of St. John Chrysostom's Letter to Theodore of Mopsuestia. His main fields of research are the Armenian translations of Greek texts, Armenian and Indo-European linguistics, contacts between languages, and gypsy dialects. Currently, he is a visiting researcher at the University of Innsbruck, Austria.

Philological Considerations Regarding the Armenian Translation of John Chrysostom's Letter to Theodore

In 1966 J. Dumortier published a detailed critical edition of the Greek original of John Chrysostom's *Letter to Theodore* and its old Latin translation. However, it appears that the editor was unfamiliar with the existence of an early Armenian version of the work, which, because its antiquity, can be considered a very important source for reconstructing the history of the Greek text. A systematic comparison of the Armenian translation with the Greek original permits us to define relatively clearly the relation of the translation to the Greek manuscript tradition. Not only does the base text, from which the Armenian translation derives, not reflect the profile of any known Greek manuscript, but it seems to depend on a form of text predating the differentiation of the unitary tradition into the three families Dumortier identifies. In a not insignificant number of cases the Armenian translation presupposes a text, which does not correspond to any known Greek witness and cannot be explained by the Armenian translator's misreading or solipsistic lexical choices. On account of its antiquity (probably 5th or 6th century) and especially because of its independence from the different families of Greek extant manuscripts, the Armenian version of this work can make a valuable contribution to the study of the Greek text and its history.



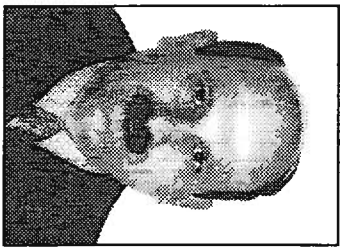
Liitt Hovsepijan

Philology, Khachatur Abovian State Pedagogical University, Armenia

Liitt Hovsepijan was born in 1976 in the town of Kajaran in the Armenian Republic. In 1993, she graduated from high school and entered the Abovian State Pedagogical University, where she majored in philology. Graduating *summa cum laude* in 1998, she was accepted into the graduate program there in philological sciences. The topic of her dissertation, which she defended in 2002, is "The Medieval Armenian Interpretation of the Biblical Book of Song of Songs." Currently, she works as a tutor in Armenian literature at the Pedagogical University.

The Relation Between Grigor Narekats'i's Commentary on 'Song of Songs' and His Tagh Poems

Affinities between the Song of Songs, the mystic poet Grigor Narekats'i's commentary on it, and his tagh compositions can be established by various means. First of all, one should note that the commentary was Narekats'i's first literary work, written in 977 at the request of Gurgen, King of Vaspurakan. Moreover, as Dolukhanyan and Khachatryan have demonstrated, the biblical text he was commenting upon also left its telltale imprint on the monk's taghs, three of which replicate versification patterns characteristic of Song of Songs. However, the main area of commonality between the three works mentioned is their particular appeal to allegory and employment of allegoric interpretation. The paper will provide a detailed analysis of this subject in order to substantiate this argument. Among other aspects of the topic, it will explore Narekats'i's interpretation of the love imagery between a man and a woman, which permeates the Song of Songs and the importance he places on the sacredness of marriage as a type achieving its full expression only in God's boundless love for humanity. The centrality of relation between human and divine love will also be explored in Narekats'i's tagh poems. In addition, other similar symbols and motifs common to all three texts will be discussed, as well as the stylistic feature of constructing climaxes, which is discernible both in the commentary and taghs.



Ohannes Geukjian

Peace Studies, University of Bradford, England

Ohannes Geukjian was born in 1960 in Beirut and attended the Khanamirian College there until the Lebanese Civil War interrupted his secondary education. Moving to Aleppo, he graduated from the Karen Yeppe Jemaran. In 1980 Ohannes continued his studies at the American University of Beirut (AUB), majoring in Political Science and Public Administration. Graduating in 1985 with a B.A. in

Political Science, he embarked on an M.A. in International Relations at the same institution, which he completed in 1989. Ohannes also taught European history, Lebanese history, geography, and philosophy at the Armenian Shamlian Tatikian Evangelical Secondary School in Beirut (1986-2000). Since 1998 he has been enrolled in the graduate program in Peace Studies at Bradford University, while at the same time lecturing at Haigazian University and the Lebanese American University (LAU) in Beirut. His field of specialization is ethnic conflict and peace.

The Historical and Territorial Dimensions of the Nagorno-Karabagh Conflict between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis

My paper analyses the history of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict

between the Armenians and Azerbaijanis in the South Caucasus from 1905 to 2001, and the OSCE mediated peace process from 1992 to 2001. Against this background, it investigates the complexity of Armenian and Azerbaijani national identity and these states' overlapping claims to the disputed territory.

Substantial emphasis is placed on the origins of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict and their historical, territorial, and ethnic dimensions. Hence, the paper underscores the link between ethnicity and territorial location as sources of ethnic identification. In this connection, particular attention is paid to Soviet Azerbaijan state policies in Nagorno-Karabagh, and the nature of the region's administrative autonomy, which became a source of conflict. In this context, the paper examines and analyses the legitimacy of Armenian ethnic claims, the strategic use of violence, Moscow's handling of the conflict, and finally Nagorno-Karabagh's secession and independence from Azerbaijan.

The paper also reviews the OSCE mediatory role (1992-2001), highlighting the various peace plans that it offered to resolve the conflict, focusing particularly on the dynamics of the peace process and the internal and external difficulties that impeded it. In conclusion, the paper pinpoints the difficulty of achieving a compromise resolution of the Nagorno-Karabagh conflict, given the realities of ethnicity and ethno-nationalism in Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Nagorno-Karabagh.



Asbed Kotchikian

Political Science, Boston University

In addition to his above affiliation, Asbed Kotchikian is also a researcher in the Eurasia Program at the Judge Institute of Management in Cambridge, England. He spent two years (2000-02) in the South Caucasus, where he conducted research while a visiting lecturer at local universities, including the American University of Armenia and Erevan State

University. He has also taught courses in political science at the Rigva Stradina University in Latvia as well as Boston University and Wheaton College (MA). His field of study is the contemporary political history of the post-Soviet South Caucasus, with a focus on issues of political development, conflict resolution, and issues of identity and transformation.

One Country's Enemy is Another One's Ally: The Perceived Roles of Russia and Turkey in Georgian and Armenian Foreign Policies

Since their independence, the new republics of Armenia and Georgia have conducted their foreign policies based on their respective vested interests.

While lacking historical experience in independence, these states have, nevertheless, formulated their policies based on their historical experience of nationhood. In this respect, the views that Armenia and Georgia have toward Russia and Turkey have been almost diametrically opposed. Thus, while Armenia considers Russia to be the guarantor of its independence against Turkey, Georgia views Russia as the historical enemy, which abolished the last independent Georgian kingdom.

Similarly Turkey is viewed by Georgia as the strategic partner linking Georgia to the West and Western institutions such as NATO, whereas, for Armenia, Turkey remains the historical "sworn enemy". While relatively cordial relations could have developed between Georgia and Armenia after independence, the former's dependence on Turkey and the latter's on Russia continues to hinder potential cooperation between these two small states.

This paper will examine the various factors impacting Armeno-Georgian bilateral relations. It will discuss whether the two countries can reconcile their divergent foreign policies within a system of regional co-operation. In this connection, it will also consider the extent to which the presence of an ethnic Armenian minority in Georgia affects interstate relations. In seeking to answer such questions and gain a better grasp of the historic dynamics and current grievances between the two states, it may be possible to outline bilateral relations between the two countries based on respect for each other's political priorities.

2004 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies
Friday, February 20, 2004 – UCLA Royce Hall 314

9:00-9:45 Breakfast
9:45-10:00 Opening Remarks

Ani Moughlamian, Project Director, 2004 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies

Dr. Peter Cowe, Narekatsi Professor of Armenian Studies at UCLA

Session 1 – Classical Literature [10:00 to 10:55]

Chair: **Lilit Keshishyan** (Comparative Literature, UCLA)

10:05-10:30 **Andrea Scala**
 (Linguistics and Philology, State University of Milan)
Philological Considerations Regarding the Armenian Translation of John Chrysostom's Letter to Theodora

10:30-10:55 **Lilit Hovsepian**
 (Armenian Classic Literature, Khachatur Abovian State Pedagogical University, Armenia)
The Relation Between Grigor Narekatsi's Commentary on 'Song of Songs' and His Tagh Poems

10:55-11:05 General Discussion
11:05-11:15 Coffee Break

Session 2 – The History and Contemporary Politics of Transcaucasia [11:15 to 12:20]
 Chair: **Gevorg Nazaryan** (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA)

11:20-11:45 **Ohannes Geukjian**
 (Peace Studies, University of Bradford, England)
The Historical and Territorial Dimensions of the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict between the Armenians and the Azerbaijanis

11:45-12:10 **Asbed Kotchikian**
 (Political Science, Boston University)
One Country's Enemy is Another One's Ally: The Perceived Roles of Russia and Turkey in Georgian and Armenian Foreign Policies

12:10-12:20 General Discussion
12:20-1:20 Lunch

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Session 3 – Modern Literature [1:20 to 2:40]

Chair: **Myrna Douzjian** (Comparative Literature, UCLA)

1:25-1:50 **Karen Chanslyan**
 (Foreign Literature & Literary Theory, Brynson State Linguistic University, Armenia)
One Salled over Mount Ararat

1:50-2:15 **Tamar Boyadjian**
 (Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA)
Nature and the Desire for Immortality and Spiritualism: The Use of Natural Imagery in the Poetry of Indra, Misk Medarenis and Tavriel Varuzhan

2:15-2:40 **Talar Chahinian**
 (Comparative Literature, UCLA)
Absence as Testimony of Trauma in the Aftermath: A Sample of French-Armenian Literature between the Wars

2:40-2:55 General Discussion
2:55-3:05 Tea Break

Session 4 – Armenians and Education Issues in the United States [3:05 to 4:25]
 Chair: **Ani Nahapetian** (School of Engineering & Computer Science, UCLA)

3:10-3:35 **Ani Moughlamian**
 (School of Education, UCLA)
Uncle Haig and the Pomegranate: The English Language and Literacy Achievement of Armenian American EL Students

3:35-4:00 **Artineh Samkian**
 (School of Education, UCLA)
Swimming with the Mainstream: Negotiating Language Use in an Armenian Private School

4:00-4:25 **Yeghrem Mehranian**
 (Teacher Education and Curriculum Studies, University of Massachusetts at Amherst)
Searching for Identity

4:25-4:45 General Discussion
4:45-6:00 Reception (Royce Hall 306)



Karen Gharshyan

Phiology, V Bryusov State Linguistics University, Armenia

*Karen was born in 1979 in Erevan, in the Armenian Republic. After completing secondary school in 1996, he continued his education at the V. Bryusov State Linguistic University in the department of Romance and Germanic Languages, majoring in English and German. Graduating summa cum laude in 2001, he began graduate studies in English and American literature at the same institution. Currently, he is putting the finishing touches to his thesis on Sterne, Joyce, Einstein, and intertextuality. Since 1999, he has been writing poetry and fiction. In May 2003, he published his first book *X Frames/Sec*, slightly enlarging the scope of Armenian studies.*

ONE SAILED OVER MOUNT ARARAT

Are we the descendants of a famous sailor that became the captain of the human race at God's will? Are Armenians the lineal descendants of this captain commonly known as Noah. The issue of the genesis of humankind with particular regard to the legend of Noah and the Flood is at the core of this paper. According to the Old Testament, Noah and his family inaugurated the current human race after the deadly Flood. However, in the view of the Biblical version of the deluge, and according to Armenian traditions, Noah and his family are, first of all, the progenitors of the Armenian nation. To investigate the accuracy of such suppositions a comparative analysis is conducted of influential non-Armenian views on the matter. Two monumental works have been selected as a prism through which to explore the topic: Giambattista Vico's *New Science* (1774) and James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Joyce vastly admitted the concept of the cyclic nature of history developed in Vico's book and borrowed it to shape the spacial and temporal structure of his *Finnegans Wake*. However, these borrowings often showcase discrepancies between Joyce's and Vico's ideas. A case in point is Vico's view concerning the identity of the first people or nation in the world, which Joyce crucially transforms in favor of the Armenian people in *Finnegans Wake*. The following are some of the central issues to be addressed in the paper:

1. The extent to which the legend of the Flood and Noah is genuine.
2. The first nation(s) in the early post-Flood period.
3. The ways in which Joyce contradicts Vico's views concerning the first post-flood nation.



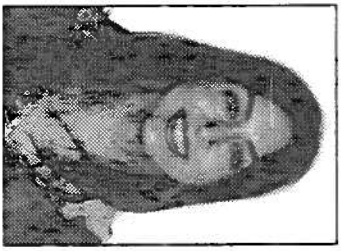
Tamar Boyadjian

Near Eastern Languages and Cultures, UCLA

After receiving her BA in English Literature with a World Literature concentration from the University of California, Los Angeles in 2002, Tamar Marie Boyadjian was accepted into the Graduate Studies program in the department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at UCLA. Focusing in the field of Armenian studies, Tamar is now working on her Master's degree in Armenian Literature. Her main interest is to compare and study the relationship of the literature of Medieval Armenia to the literature of Medieval England. She also has a strong interest in Armenian poetry and her own poetry has been published in various journals, periodicals, and newspapers. She was also the creator of the first Armenian literary competition at UCLA in 2001, which encouraged junior high and high school students to express themselves in the Armenian language.

NATURE AND THE DESIRE FOR IMMORALITY AND SPIRITUALISM: THE USE OF NATURAL IMAGERY IN THE POETRY OF INDRA, MISAK MEZARENTS, AND TANIEL VARUZHAN.

This paper offers a brief overview of the use of natural imagery in three Western Armenian poets of the late 19th and early 20th century- Indra, Misak Mezarents, and Taniel Varuzhan. For these three poets nature becomes a means of expression of their ideas, their inner being, and their longing for a deeper quality of life, which they strive to achieve through their individual understanding of nature. In Indra's poetry, nature takes on the meaning of a deeper spiritualism and a new religion, which he finds embodied in the Cypress Grove and seeks to be a part of. As in Indra, Mezarents, too, expresses a pantheistic creed in his work; yet for him, the beauty and creation of nature involves a higher spiritualism in the form of dreams and reveries. He uses nature and his senses to render personal experiences which he does not want to forget. He is seeking to experience and hold on to this world, which is withering away because of his sickness. For Varuzhan, images of nature bring about a sense of liveliness and union to the divine, resulting in a harmony and synergy between man and nature. The symbolic images of the rejuvenation of the Armenian landscape are used to address the poet's desire for a political rejuvenation and to free the Armenian spirit from external chain in a new form of Nationalism.



Talar Chahinian

Comparative Literature, UCLA

Talar Chahinian is a third-year graduate student, as well as a Teaching Assistant, working on her PhD in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Los Angeles. She was born in Lebanon, where she received her early education, and subsequently continued her studies in Los Angeles, earning a B.A. in Comparative Literature from UCLA in 2000. Working within the fields of Armenian Studies, French and trauma theory, she is interested in the works of French-Armenian writers, who have survived the Genocide and are writing in France during the period between the World Wars. Her research seeks to read the works of these writers as testimony of trauma in the Aftermath, and pursue the greater question of how fiction can function as an indicator of "pathology" and hence serve as a mode of testimonial.

Absence as Testimony of Trauma in the Aftermath: A Sample of French-Armenian Literature between the Wars

There is a short-lived period of literary activity, which is often overlooked when looking at Armenian genocide literature. From the late 1920s to the 1940s, France became home for many Armenian intellectuals and writers who had survived the genocide and its deportations, and had made their way to the growing community of Armenians in Paris. For a period of about two decades, Paris served as a center of Armenian intellectual life in the Diaspora, and produced an explosion of literary groups, journals, and novels. Written by survivors of the genocide, the literature of this period contains very little overt connections to the past. Memory of the trauma or nostalgia of a homeland-lost is absent from the texts. I would like to propose that although genocide memory is absent from these texts, literature of this period can be read as a testimonial of the trauma in its aftermath through the very repression of genocide memory. Hrach Zardarian's *Mor Gyankê* [Our Life] of 1934, and Zareh Orburni's *Porzê* [The Attempt] of 1929 both capture the melancholia, which is characteristic of the period of aftermath, for mourning and working through are not yet possible. Using a psychoanalytic approach, and focusing on these two texts, my paper will explore the idea that aftermath experience, as a trace of historical trauma, can refer to that trauma without explicitly describing it.



Ani Moughamian

Education – Psychological Studies in Education, UCLA

Ani Christina Moughamian is a native Californian who completed her BA in Psychology and English at Stanford University in 1997. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Education, Psychological Studies in Education division, where she examines literacy and language outcomes in Armenian American English Learner children. Her work focuses primarily on the relationships between culture, heritage language, narrative, and literacy, and she hopes to continue to pursue these topics in a university teaching position. When not working on her research, she likes to spend time outdoors, with her friends and family, or reading a good book.

Uncle Haig and The Pomegranate: The English Language and Literacy Achievement of Armenian American EL students

The 2001-02 California language census reports a largely unknown fact: children whose first language is Armenian form the second largest language minority group in the Los Angeles school district, and are the largest group in the Glendale School District. We know that children who lack strong literacy skills at the end of elementary school are at higher risk for dropping out of school (National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, 2000), so it is important to understand the links between culture, ancestral language, and literacy outcomes. This paper will explore academic and literacy outcomes, as well as oral language and ethnic identity in Armenian American English Learners (EL students).

First, I examine the academic achievement of Armenian American EL students in Southern California using available public data sources, including school achievement data from the California census, school district websites, and the California Department of Education website.

Second, I consider oral narrative skills and the influence of Armenian culture on those skills in 49 Armenian-American 4th, 5th, and 6th grade EL students. I will examine how the children's narrative skills may impact their literacy outcomes, and then focus more closely on the distinguishing features of their narratives, which may form a distinctly Armenian style of narrative. The narratives will also be used to understand how much the children identify with their ethnic background. This paper serves as the first comprehensive look at academic achievement outcomes in this group of students, and provides us with a better understanding of the links between culture, language, and literacy.



Artineh Samkian

Education – Social Research Methodology, UCLA

Artineh Samkian is a first year doctoral student in the Social Research Methodology Division of the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies. Before coming to UCLA as a Masters student one year ago, Artineh taught sixth grade math and English for one year in the Los Angeles Unified School District. Her undergraduate training is in anthropology from Occidental College. She plans to continue research on Armenians and Armenian-Americans as she writes her dissertation on schooling, socialization, and what it means to live and grow up in America.

Swimming with the Mainstream:

Negotiating Language Use in an Armenian Private School

As a country of immigrants, the United States has always been a stage on which tensions between home and host country values have been played out. Decades of debates on whether immigrants assimilate, accommodate, or preserve their ethnic and cultural identity characterize these tensions. One can see such issues when analyzing American public education, as well as that of the various private schools that have arisen, often in opposition to mainstream education.

This presentation represents an ethnographic study of a local Armenian private school, focusing on the language choice and practices of the students during "Armenian time". The students' curriculum allowed for only one hour of Armenian instruction per day nestled within a largely English curriculum. I studied patterns of interaction in the classroom, the various implicit rules governing the uses of Armenian and English, and when each was used and for what purposes. I observed the way in which "Armenian time" was co-constructed, highlighting the teacher's hope to instill pride in her students regarding their language - and by extension their cultural heritage - while at the same time allowing for the students' agency to negotiate their own sense of identity.

Although this research is not yet complete, I will be embedding these "on the ground" practices within a historical analysis of American education as a tool for Americanization. This discussion illuminates the factors motivating the attempt to preserve one's cultural identity through the establishment of private institutions. The survival of these institutions in America highlights many immigrants' needs to remain rooted in their cultural heritage, while also negotiating mainstream culture.



Yeprem Mihanian

Teacher Education and School Improvement, University of Massachusetts at Amherst

Yeprem was born in Iran where he graduated from an Armenian high school. Later, in the United States, Yeprem studied art and elementary education and became a teacher in the New York City Public School System. In 1991, he left the United States and spent five years in Armenia, teaching in a variety of settings, including the American University of Armenia. On completing his studies, his main goals are to write a charter for a Los Angeles based school with an Armenian Studies component and/or to found a school with a core curriculum of Homeland/Diaspora Studies in Armenia.

Searching For Identity

I will begin my presentation by highlighting aspects of what I learned from a pilot project I conducted on questions of dual identity and language in one Armenian day-school in the United States. A stated educational objective of many such schools is to provide their students with the ability to effectively negotiate between an American identity and an Armenian one. I also learned that the question of dual identity in this country embodies a number of critical issues, mainly, those of Home and Diaspora, majority and minority nationalisms, assimilation and pluralism, and the all-pervasive question of power: of mainstream dominance and side-stream subjugation. In fact, the question of identity itself, as it has transpired in the West, has its own particular history of vicissitudes and transformations, akin to the emergence of modernity.

In the second part of my presentation, beginning with this history, I will share aspects of the present stage of my research: the topic and concept of my dissertation project. This is a case study with which I intend to learn more about how the various members of an Armenian day-school community conceive, represent, and act on their identities. Also to be explored is the relationship between how these individuals narrate and actualize their ethnic and cultural identities and what the school claims on that topic.

Since I am about to begin my fieldwork, your feedback on the more specific dimensions of the methodological and conceptual components of this dissertation proposal will help clarify the work that lies ahead.

UCLA Armenian Graduate Students Association

The UCLA Armenian Graduate Students Association (AGSA) was established in January of 2002. It seeks to enhance the graduate student experience at UCLA through academic and professional development, networking, and mentorship through the organization of events relevant to the Armenian community and Armenian issues. It is a student run organization which strongly encourages member-initiated/led programming.

This past academic term, the UCLA AGSA hosted Dr. Ara Sanjian ("Turkey and Her Arab Neighbors in the Baghdad Pact Era, 1953-1958") and Elma Hovhessian (author of the novel "Under the Blue Dome"). It has also organized its first mentorship event and networking events of this academic year:

In March 2004, the UCLA AGSA will be hosting a collaborative exhibit of contemporary Armenian art, literature, and music with more programming to following in subsequent months.

In order to help provide more professional development as well as networking opportunities, the UCLA AGSA maintains open lines of communications with the various Armenian community and professional organizations such as the Armenian Bar Association and the Armenian Engineers and Scientists of America.

The UCLA AGSA is particularly proud of its 2004 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies project committee as it embodies the ideals of our mission statement from its organization to its implementation. We hope that it will serve as an inspiration to our members as well as a model for future Armenian student group programming.

Please visit our homepage at

*<<http://www.studentgroups.ucla.edu/agsa>>
contact us at agsaucla@ucla.edu if you would like more information regarding the UCLA AGSA, its goals, activities, and/or how to keep in contact with us.*

Acknowledgements

The organizing committee of the 2004 Graduate Student Colloquium in Armenian Studies would like to thank the following for their support of today's program:

This event was funded by the Campus Programs Committee of the Program Activities Board and the UCLA Graduate Students Association and was made possible by financial contributions from

The Graduate Division of UCLA

The Center for European and Eurasian Studies

The Friends of the UCLA Armenian Language and Culture Studies

The Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures

The Society for Armenian Studies

The Program in Indo-European Studies

The Department of Comparative Literature

The Department of Art History

Parouir Akopian

Zareh H. Yartivarian

Raffi Dishakjian

SPECIAL THANKS TO

*Janis Guzman and Pam Cysner
Center for Student Programming*

*Chakib Chamaa
UCLA Travel Center*

And

*Flor De Café Bakery, Yeznik Tamaryan
Snookies Cookies, Garin Yeghiazarian
Burger Continental, Taleen Hindoyan
Bagel Broker, Mr. Tarnol*